the v-'orld; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MFNTSTER OF STATE OF THE MfNiSTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BALLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) The ASSOCHAM has represented to the Government to remove constraints which emanate from problems of infrastructure particularly in ports, airports availability of railway wagons and roads. They have also requested the Government, inter-alia to make the SAFTA an effective forum, establish parity of Rupee and Dollar, establish better relations with ASEAN countries, improve product-mix for export, promote Indian Brand Equiiy, set up Warehousing facilities abroad, combat tnon-tariff barriers and establish quality management.

(c) and (d) The Governm-nent facilities efforts to explore now market and products. A number of markets were explored for specific expoir'ts during the last year which include South Africa Botswana, Swaziland, Argentina, Brazil and Israel. The border trade with Mye-mmar, is also being promoted. The medium term export strategy being formulated by the Ministry will include efforts to widen our presence by expanding exports to cover new markets which are important globally.

Import al RBD Pafmoline through SIC

2200. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH:

SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact inat Govern ment has recently decided to ianiport the RBD Palmoline On P.O.B. througih STC instead of C&F and whether any reprefsen-tation has been received i!n this regard, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether it is also a fact that that *Go-vernment* had suffered a loss of huge quantity of foreign exchange by importing the oil on C&F basis and intermedia-ries has made huge profits by importing thi soil through STC on C&F basis; and

(c) by when the import of this oil' *FOB i's* to start; and if not, the reasons, therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY, OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAMIAH): (a) to (c) STC is the cAnalisi-ng agency for im port of RBD almoline or supply under Public Distribution System as per the connected policy of the Govt, in the Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs In terms of the exi'sting policy, while all import contracts are to be finalised on FOB basis; STC has been imiporting edi ble oil for PDS for a number of years of CIF (Cost In'surance Freight) terms after obtaining necessary exemption from the Ministry of Surface Transport as CIF imports are more convenient and economical.

An individual representation has been received, in which a plea has been made to effect import of food items on FQB basis.

Since the year 1990-91, STC has, however, been i;ncurring losses in its edible oil operations for PDS mainly due to the devaluation of the Rupee and the actual landed cost of the imported pal-moline being higher 'than the Central' ftsue Price charged from the States. The Govt, has been recouping the deficit in Edible Oil Account by providing finalp-cial assistance to STC from time to time.

As a matter of policy for the import of edible oils, STC deals directly oni principal to principal basis without inter-' mediaries.

Shifting of items *from* sicial impor/ *llceikei li*st to OGiL, liifei

2201. SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA:

SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) government havg recently